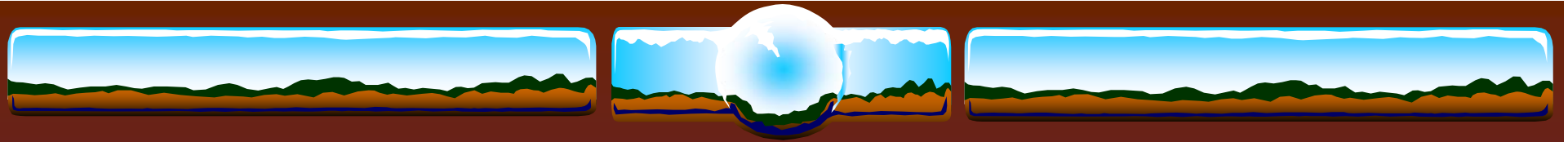


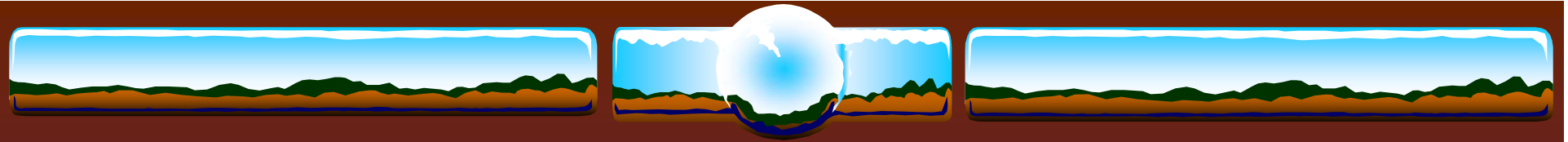
FIRST 5 IN 58 COUNTIES

Addressing the Evaluation
Challenges in Diverse California
Counties



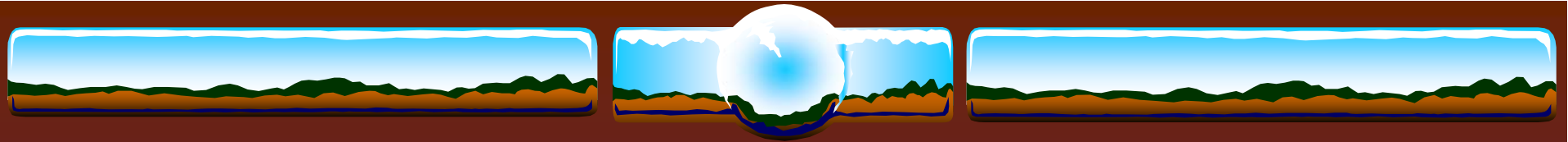
Presentation Objectives

- ❖ Assist potential Consultants in understanding the diversity of California commissions; and
- ❖ Present evaluation challenges and critical factors for success from the county commission perspectives.



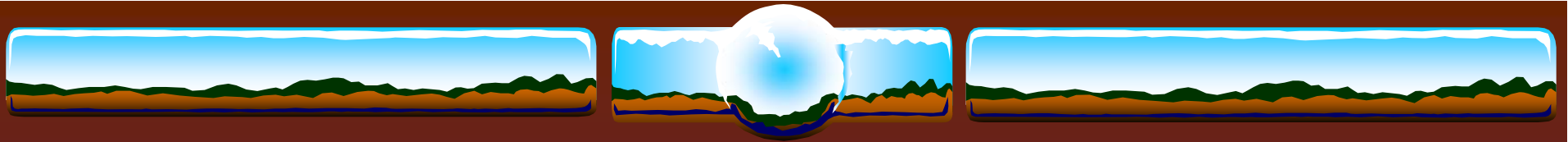
First 5 – A New Kind of Government

- ❖ Services provided by other organizations;
- ❖ Explicitly driven by mission and outcomes;
- ❖ Classic start-up environment;
- ❖ Specific autonomy of local commissions



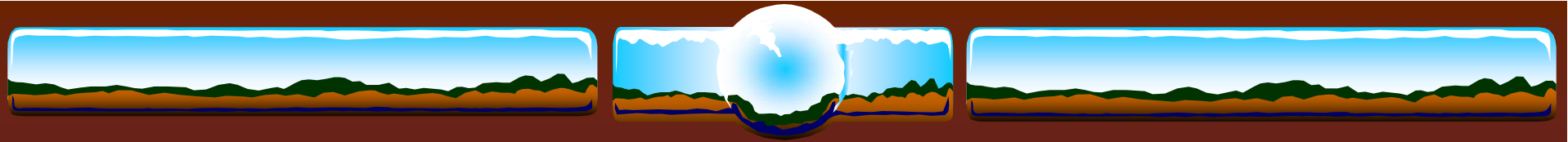
Lessons Learned About First 5 Evaluation

- ❖ There is a commitment to a statewide evaluation framework and effective outcomes management.
- ❖ The approach must balance local autonomy against the need for statewide messages .
- ❖ There is a demand for shared learning, between counties, about strategies, best practices, and outcomes.
- ❖ One Size Does Not Fit All.



Why Do Local Commissions Evaluate?

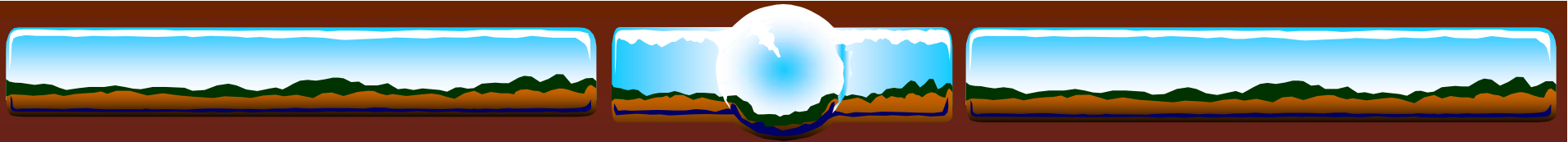
- ❖ To learn about the accomplishments and effectiveness of locally funded programs;
- ❖ To guide future program development or funding decisions; and
- ❖ To continually track progress toward the goals and objectives in their strategic plans, as per statutory requirements.



Local Evaluation is Multi-Layered

Commissions carry out their evaluation work to:

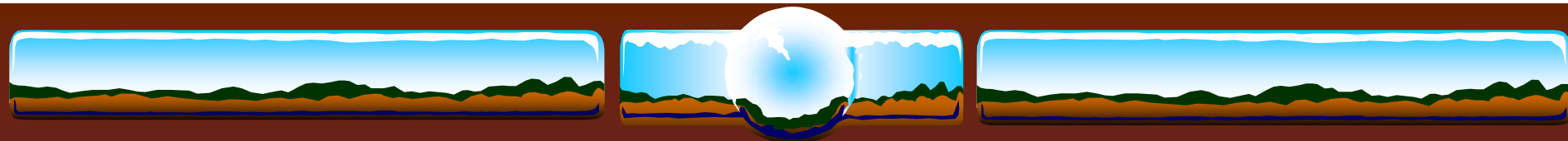
- ❖ Inform the commission on the effectiveness of locally funded programs, both individually and in concert; and
- ❖ Inform county-wide or region-wide collaborative efforts with other key stakeholders.



California Has 58 Diverse Counties

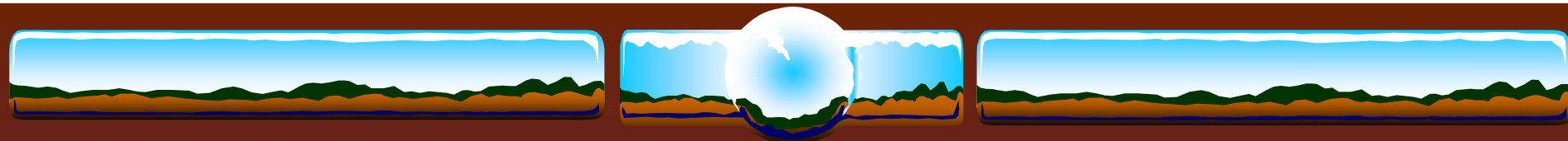
Counties Vary in:

- ❖ Population Size and Characteristics
- ❖ Resources
- ❖ Evaluation Capabilities
- ❖ Funding Approaches
- ❖ Commission Governance & Stakeholder Influence
- ❖ Strategic Plans



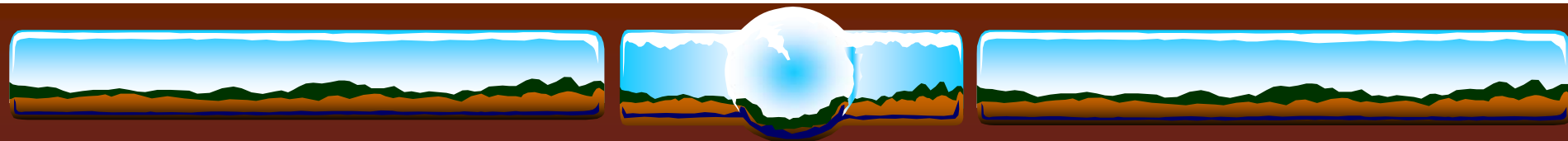
Populations Vary

- ❖ Birth Rates Range from 12 per year (Alpine County) to over 150,000 per year (Los Angeles County).
- ❖ 2/3rds of California's young families live in the Southern California region.
- ❖ Service Delivery Must Reflect the Population:
 - ❖ Urban, Suburban or Rural
 - ❖ Geographically Clustered or Dispersed
 - ❖ Different Languages and Cultures



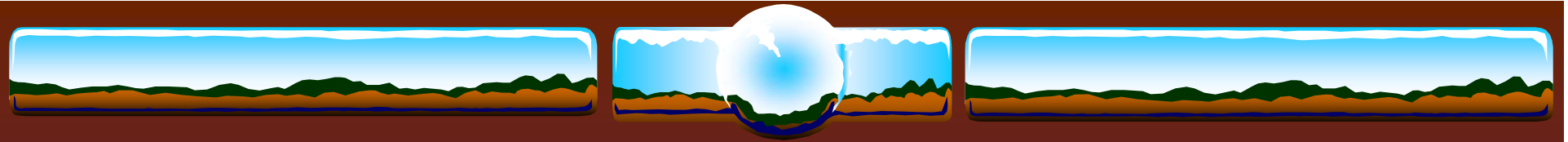
Resources Vary

- ❖ Annual allocations vary from \$200 thousand to over \$139 million dollars.
- ❖ County commission staff resources can vary from under 2 FTEs to over 72 FTEs.
- ❖ Community resources for families vary – smaller counties and communities look to First 5 to build basic family service infrastructure.



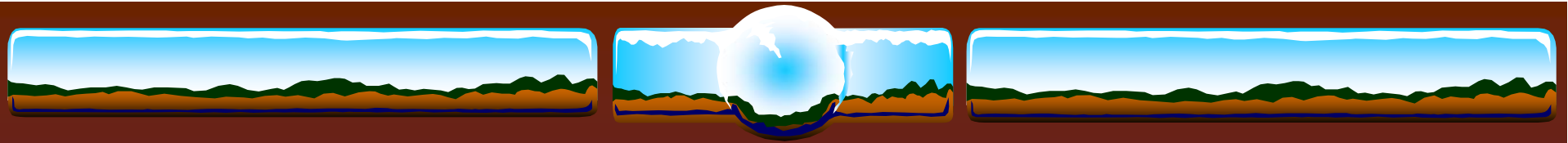
Evaluation Capabilities Vary

- ❖ The available evaluation expertise and resources varies widely between counties. Evaluation may be performed by consultants, by dedicated staff or by Executive Directors (in some small counties).
- ❖ Technical assistance needs vary widely .
- ❖ County evaluation systems range from extensive technology systems to paper reporting, with combinations.



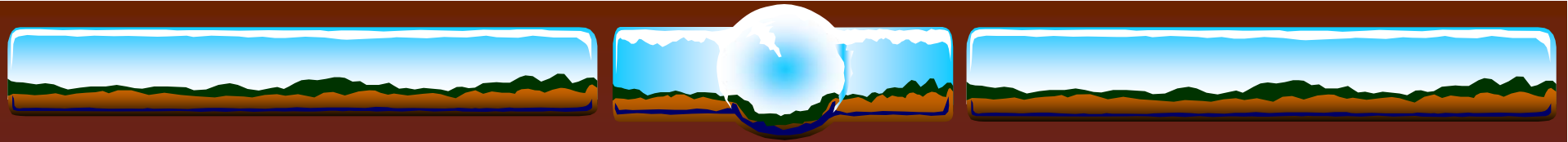
Funding Approaches Vary

- ❖ Grants of varying sizes – multi-million dollar contracts to mini grants;
- ❖ Multi-year grants and one-time-only grants;
- ❖ Grants funded by multiple sources including leveraged funds;
- ❖ Multiple grants under initiative areas; and
- ❖ Commission-run ongoing programs



Commissions Vary

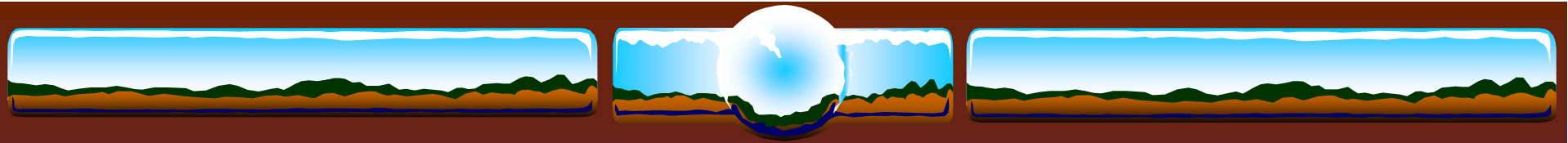
- ❖ Differences in governance structure:
 - ❖ County
 - ❖ Independent
- ❖ Commissions experience varying levels of stakeholder influence, which may, in turn, affect how funds are allocated and how programs are evaluated.



Strategic Plans Vary

Commissions address children's needs through a variety of approaches:

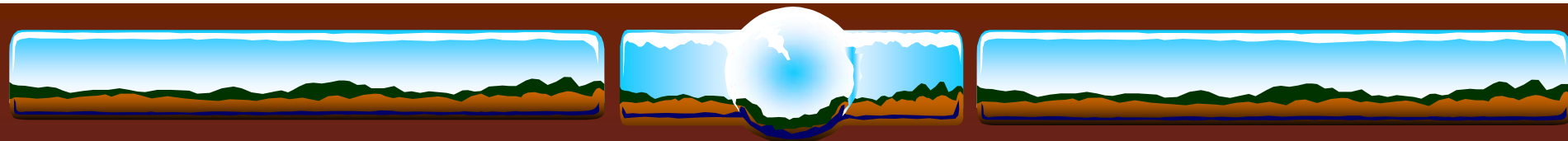
- ❖ Provide leadership in new program development
- ❖ Serve as gap or niche funders
- ❖ Address fundamental system development
- ❖ Provide intensive support in a few areas, or broad support in many areas.



We Are Getting the Job Done

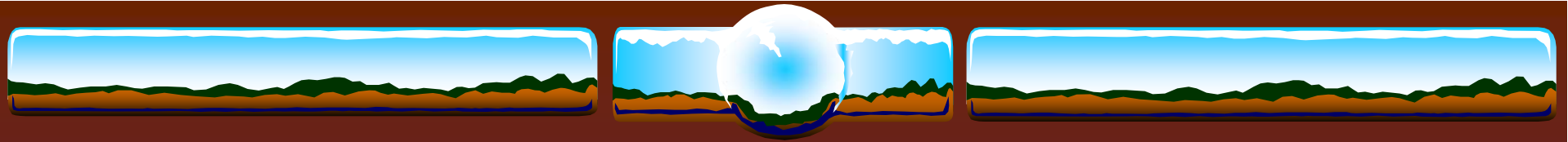
In FY 2003/2004, County Commissions:

- ❖ reached over 15 million people through community outreach activities;
- ❖ provided direct services to about 3.4 million children and families;
- ❖ funded over 1,800 organizations to implement approximately 2,400 programs for families; and
- ❖ Made significant investments in systems change efforts to promote accessible and coordinated services.



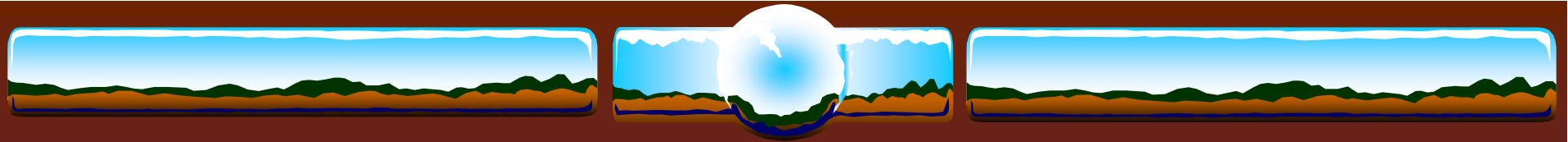
Local Evaluation Challenges

- ❖ Providing data that can paint a picture when the exact data needed is not available or feasible
- ❖ Having realistic expectations for data collection and outcome reporting
- ❖ Balancing the data collection burden for grantees with the need (or desire) for data elements
- ❖ Making sure that data is interpreted realistically
- ❖ Addressing the challenge of limited resource availability, in small counties, for evaluation expertise and tools.



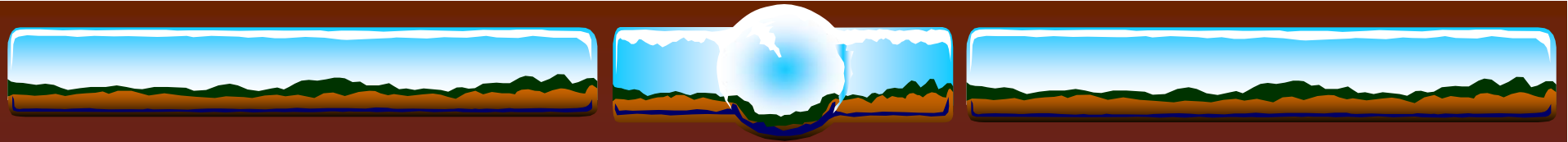
What is Working Well?

- ❖ The Framework has been built as a result of a cooperative working relationship between the State and County Commissions.
- ❖ There is a commitment to support the Framework and statewide evaluation by County Commissions



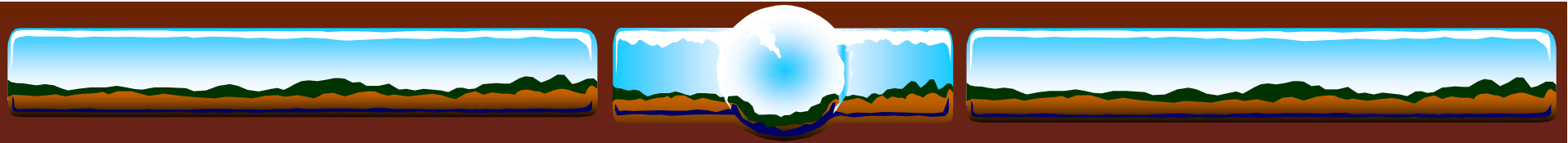
What The New Framework Promises

- ❖ Greater link of local evaluation efforts to statewide evaluation;
- ❖ Synthesis of data from multiple sources to enhance learning;
- ❖ Greater link between evaluation, media advocacy and policy development;
- ❖ Reflection of the integrated nature of our programs.



What The New Framework Promises

- ❖ Reflection of the varied approaches, systems and levels of measurement;
- ❖ A balance between standard setting and a respect for local autonomy;
- ❖ Flexibility to allow for continuous review of the evaluation approach and a process for learning, responsiveness, and improvement.



Results We Hope For:

- ❖ Counties will voluntarily adopt the new framework rather than respond only to legal mandates;
- ❖ Key stakeholders will gain a better understanding of what First 5 programs are accomplishing for California children;
- ❖ First 5 systems across the state will be improved as a result of sharing results, best practices, and challenges.

We Look
Forward to Our
Partnership!

